

## A meeting with the Author Bali Rai

On Monday 11th June, Mrs Hargreaves organised a meeting with the author Bali Rai. All Year 8 girls left the School at about 9.30am and took a bus to Churchill Square. Once there, we went into Borders Bookshop, where a young man was waiting for us. We were all expecting a long, boring meeting with someone who was going to talk only about himself, but we were to be surprised.

Bali Rai is a very lively and energetic man, who started talking in a straightforward way about what he writes and especially how he finds the inspiring ideas for his books. In them he often refers to the multicultural environment he grew up in in Leicester. There white, black and Asian kids grow up together and there is no discrimination, because all are accustomed to living with people of different races since birth.

He also talked about his new book "The Angel Collector" which was his first thriller and how hard it was to get into the killer's mind, writing from the perspective of the main character, a young boy, who talks in a very informal way.

This is a feature you can find in many of his books, as we discovered when he read extracts from some of them.

When we asked him what book was the hardest to write, he told us that "Rani and Sukh" had been very challenging for him as he had to live for several months as if he was a 16 year old pregnant girl, thinking and acting in the same way.

The book that took him the most time to write was his first one, "(An) Arranged Marriage" because it had been his first experience and he wasn't a well-known author.

He also gave us advice about the best thing to do if you want to become a writer and how important it is to read a lot and practise your writing.

When we finished we had the chance to buy some of his books and have them signed by him. I bought "(An) Arranged Marriage" and I have to say, I am really enjoying it. Bali Rai is a very good author and I am glad I had the chance to meet him.

**Rebecca Brambilla, Year 9**

## Poem corner

### where am I?

The sound of music  
The clapping to a beat  
The swishing of skirts  
The stamping of feet

As light as a feather  
As smooth as a swan  
As dainty as a dolly  
With a leotard on!

**Emily Homer, Year 5**

### where?

Plants wave  
Grass underneath  
Lavender drifts  
All is silent  
Birds in the sky  
Rustling in the trees  
All is calm  
Cold wind blows  
Cars screech  
A baby blabbers  
A boy taps  
At a window  
A cat crawls  
Over the wall

**Daisy Nixon, Year 5**

### Poem of a painting

Open pages  
Vivid colours  
Rich tastes  
Empty land

**Caitlin Bennett,  
Year 5**

### untitled

Burgundy  
and banana yellow sky  
Dreamy  
green and purple  
meadows  
Dark  
blue night  
One  
wild stream  
of colours

**Laura Still, Year 5**

# Commonwealth Day

On Monday 10th May it was Commonwealth Day and four of us were invited to attend the service at Westminster Abbey. This service is held every year, with representatives from all the countries in the Commonwealth. The Head of the Commonwealth, the Queen, is present.

That morning, we weren't at all sure that the trip would still go ahead, as there were severe weather warnings; strong winds, heavy rain and trains delayed due to weather conditions. But we heard nothing about cancellations, so Charlie, Kiwi, Damilola and I met Dr Cheng, as arranged, in the entrance hall. While we were waiting for the bus, we found that the forecast had been quite an accurate one, as the rain started turning icy and our umbrella turned inside out.

We arrived at Westminster Abbey, which I thought was an amazing piece of architecture, and took our seats. There were big television screens, where we could watch what was going on at the front of the Abbey. This modern technology seemed a little out of place in such a beautiful building.

To start with, we were watching short clips about the environment and what can be done to conserve it. Then the screens went blank, and everyone looked expectantly at the entrance where a crowd of reporters had gathered. We stood, and sang the National Anthem, as a procession of important people walked in, including the Queen!

The main purpose of the service was to let us hear how the changes in our environment affect people all over the world. Many different people gave a short talk about what changes have been taking place in their own specific country and how all of us can work together to prevent global warming.

There were also performances by an African choir, Maori dancers, and the choir of Westminster Abbey. All in all, it was a very enjoyable and thought-provoking day out.

**Rosalind Caldwell, Year 12**

## Year 7's Trip to Borders Bookshop

On the 2nd November 2007, all of Year 7 went on an English trip, by minibus to Borders Bookshop in Churchill Square, to meet the well-known children's author, Joseph Delaney. He is the creator of the series called 'The Wardstone Chronicles.' His very first book was called 'The Spook's Apprentice' from which he read us an extract.

Delaney explained how he put some of his own experiences into his books, including a scene with a cellar which he had nightmares about every night when he was a boy.

After he had finished his interesting presentation about his fantasy books people asked questions. It was then time to look around part of the shop and to purchase Delaney's books of our choice. We queued up for his signature on any of the four books he had published, which we bought ('The Spook's Curse', 'The Spook's Secret' and 'The Spook's Battle') with our name included. Delaney has provided us with lots of ideas and inspired us to write many more stories, and definitely to read more!

**Bethane Harland and Grace Sorrell, Year 7**

## 'Mankind needs religion'

This was the formidable title that our team in this year's English Speaking Union Public Speaking Competition for Schools picked as their topic. Teams come from Years 10 and 11 so we were happy when three members of Year 10 took up the challenge. Our preliminary heat, involving three other schools, took place at Brighton College on the 29th January. St Mary's Hall was represented by Holly Welsh, our Speaker, who was placed with the Chair and Questioner from Davison High School for Girls. Holly rose to the occasion, despite little time to practise. Her speech was lively and she coped well with some very demanding questions. Our other team members, Eva Howells, our charming Chair, and Briony Keir, our perceptive Questioner, were joined by the Speaker from Brighton and Hove High School. The girls enjoyed the opportunity to meet students from other schools in the imposing surroundings of the College and to discuss and debate some fascinating ideas.

Though they did not make it through to the next heat, now that Year 10 have 'cut their teeth' as a young team, we are hoping that some members of Year 11 may be willing to use the experience and participate next year. So, well done and thanks to Briony, Eva, Holly and Lola; to Mr Hargreaves for his support and wisdom; to Sara Brown and Arthur Collins of the ESU and finally Brighton College for their hospitality, including the nibbles!

**Ms Turner, English Teacher**



## Year 9's play 'The Real Game'

What is it like to be a real working adult? On 14th May, Year 9's spent the morning taking part in games and other activities where they found out what it might be like to spend a day in the life of a doctor or a website designer, for example, and how they might spend their time and money. Each worker calculated how much they would have to pay in income tax and how they would spend their leisure time. They soon saw that some of the highest paid workers had very little free time.

For many people the most enjoyable part of the day was where teams (with names such as "The Powerpuffs re-united with Mojo Jojo") took part in the Spin Game careers quiz. There was also some good creative work, including some clever business card designs. Everyone got to consider what mattered to them most in choosing the ideal job.

**Caroline O'Meara, Careers Co-ordinator**



# Another amazing year in Gloucester House

Another amazing year has passed in Gloucester House. The children continue to amaze me in regards to their personal and academic development from Nursery to Year 6!

Most recently Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 performed 'Along Came Man', a musical to remind us all about the importance of treating our planet with respect. Every girl gave her heart and soul to the performances which were outstanding. I'm sure that those of you who managed to see the performances, would agree that the girls and staff deserve the highest praise.

The Pre-Prep Nativity also gave a platform for all to be involved. The speaking roles were distributed amongst the department and all children succeeded in making this show a resounding success. The singing from Pre-Prep and Prep is something we should all be proud of.

Like the singing, swimming goes from strength to strength. As you may know swimming begins in

Reception and enables all from an early age to develop this essential life skill. As they become more proficient we see the benefits of starting early, resulting in our swimming squad performing amazingly well. At the time of writing, the girls are preparing for a national competition in Sheffield. We wish them well! I am lucky to be able to lead such a department of committed, professional teachers. Your son's or daughter's education is of paramount importance to all of the team and we work tirelessly to ensure they are part of a learning experience which supports and challenges them. This is coupled with offering them the breadth and opportunity to try many activities.

In this magazine is only a small selection of what has happened in the Junior School this year - a truly excellent representation of a nurturing environment which promotes academic challenge and achievement.

**Huw May, Head of Junior School**



Picture:  
Ruby, Year 1